(b) how it compares with the developed countries; and

(c) whether Government plan to increase this in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) The percentage of GDP towards Higher Education and Elementary Education (consisting of primary and middle education) is given below:—

Year	Higher Education	Elemenary Education
2004-05	0.44%	1.48%
2005-06	0.45%	1.57%
2006-07	0.44%	1.61%

(b) The percentage of GDP towards higher, primary and middle education separately is not available for other countries. However public expenditure on Education for all sectors as percentage of GDP is 3.39% in India during 2004-05 as compared to 5.7% in USA, 5.3% in U.K., 5.6% in France and 4.8% in Germany during the same period.

(c) The Common Minimum Programme of the Government pledges to increase the public spending in education to at least 6% of GDP in a phased manner with at least half of the amount being spent on primary and secondary education sectors. The XI Plan Approach Paper approved by NDC also says that the XI Plan should ensure that we move towards raising public spending in education to 6% of GDP.

High illiteracy rate States

95. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether eight States alone account for nearly 70 per cent of the country's illiterates, which means that out of 304 million illiterate people in the country, 212.19 million come from these eight States alone;

(b) whether, according to the recently released reports on the status of adult literacy in the country, 13 States need to pay special attention for raising their literacy levels;

(c) if so, whether this report was brought out by the National Literacy Mission; and

(d) if so, what concrete steps and measures Government propose to take, to help and assist these States to improve the position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) A publication titled "Status of Adult Literacy in India" by Shri Prem Chand based on 2001 census data has been brought out by the Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi. Nearly 70% of the illiterate populations in the country are in the 8 states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Further, 13 States namely Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar have literacy rate below the national average of 64.8%.

(d) The Universalisation of Elementary Education and eradication of adult illiteracy form the two-pronged strategy for improving the literacy rate of the country. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive programme for universalizing quality Elementary Education by 2010.

In the XI Plan, special focus would be given to SCs, STs, Minorities and rural women under National Literacy Mission. Focus would also be on low literacy States, tribal areas, other disadvantaged groups and adolescents.

Impact of price rise on Mid-Day Meal Scheme

96. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mid-Day Meal Scheme of Government will get a jolt as the Department of Food and Public Distribution has enhanced the prices of wheat and rice for the Scheme, and that for expansion of the scheme, the prices will be still higher;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering any alternative proposal for this highly successful project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps being taken to make this project a success?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No, Sir. No communication regarding enhancement of prices of wheat and rice for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been received from the Department of Food and Public Distribution. As per the existing terms and conditions, the cost of foodgrains is reimbursed at BPL rates.

(b) to (e) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

Gender parity in higher education

97. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the mid term review of UN Millennium Development Goals 2015, while gender parity is on track for primary and secondary education, the progress is slow in higher education;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken for gender parity in higher education by the stipulated time-frame?S

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) While no such comparison